

## *Cooperative initiatives and funding opportunities for habitat protection, restoration & education*

### Gulf of Maine Coastal Ecosystems Program

Voluntary habitat protection strategies include conservation easements, land acquisition, restoration and management, agricultural incentives and conservation education. Conservation organizations and private landowners interested in protecting or restoring nationally important habitat can compete for federal grants. Nationally important habitat includes coastal wetlands, nesting islands, or habitat for endangered/threatened species, migratory birds and anadromous fish. Generally, successful grant proposals must be matched by non-federal contributions, in the form of cash, material, equipment, protection lands or in-kind services. The following cooperative initiatives and matching grant opportunities can provide funds conservation activities:

### North American Waterfowl Management Plan Grants

This international effort to conserve the continent's remaining wetlands and increase migratory bird populations, provides large matching grants (up to \$1,000,000) to manage, restore and/or acquire habitat, through purchase or easement. In addition, a pilot small grants program (less than \$50,000) was established in 1996 to encourage new partnerships. The Plan has identified five priority areas in Maine — Cobscook Bay, Lower Kennebec River/Merrymeeting Bay, the East Coast, the West Coast, and Inland Wetlands. In Maine, the Maine Wetlands Coalition meets regularly to identify land protection priorities and coordinate grant applications. Substantial funds have already been directed to lands bordering Cobscook Bay and the Lower Kennebec River. Typically, habitat acquired with this funding has been transferred to Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for protection and management, but any organization that can demonstrate its ability to hold and manage land for wildlife values in perpetuity is eligible to receive a grant.

### Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants

This matching grant program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, directs funds to state conservation agencies to acquire, restore, or manage coastal wetlands for fish and wildlife values. In 1995, Lee Island, a large island in the Kennebec River with an important eagle nesting site and a fringing salt marsh, was purchased. In 1996, Hog Island and its surrounding mudflats in Machias Bay were acquired, protecting an eagle nest, thousands of migrating shorebirds and wintering black ducks. In 1997, Lines Island and its complex of estuarine wetlands at the southern end of Merrymeeting Bay, were protected for migratory bird and fish habitat. In Maine, the Maine Wetlands Coalition is taking a lead role in identifying land protection priorities and coordinating grant applications. Nationwide, recent grants have ranged from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000.

### Partners for Wildlife

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Wildlife Program provides technical assistance to solve land management problems, identifies partners and coordinates restoration work. The Partners for Wildlife Program concentrates on restoring, in a cost-effective manner:

- degraded freshwater and saltwater wetlands,
  - riparian (stream-side) habitat, and
  - habitat for migratory songbirds, endangered and threatened species, and fish.
- Restoration costs may be shared by any combination of governmental agencies, private organizations and the private landowner. The landowner is committed to maintain restored habitat for a minimum of ten years.

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## National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, a non-profit organization, was established by Congress to award grants for conservation activities that support fish, wildlife and plant conservation. Federal funds directed to the Foundation are used as seed money to attract additional private donations. Ultimately, the Foundation releases its funds (federal plus fundraising contributions) on a minimum of a 2:1 matching grant basis. Programs include habitat protection and restoration, research, public awareness and education, and management. Grants typically range from several thousand dollars to more than \$100,000 and can be directed to federal and state agencies, universities, non-profit organizations, and private corporations. Fisheries Across America is a separate grant program coordinated by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation dedicated to restoring riparian and in-stream habitat, managing fisheries, eradicating exotic species and monitoring and protecting habitat. In 1997, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded three block grants to Maine to support coastal habitat protection, Atlantic salmon restoration and protection, and seabird restoration.

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Challenge Grants

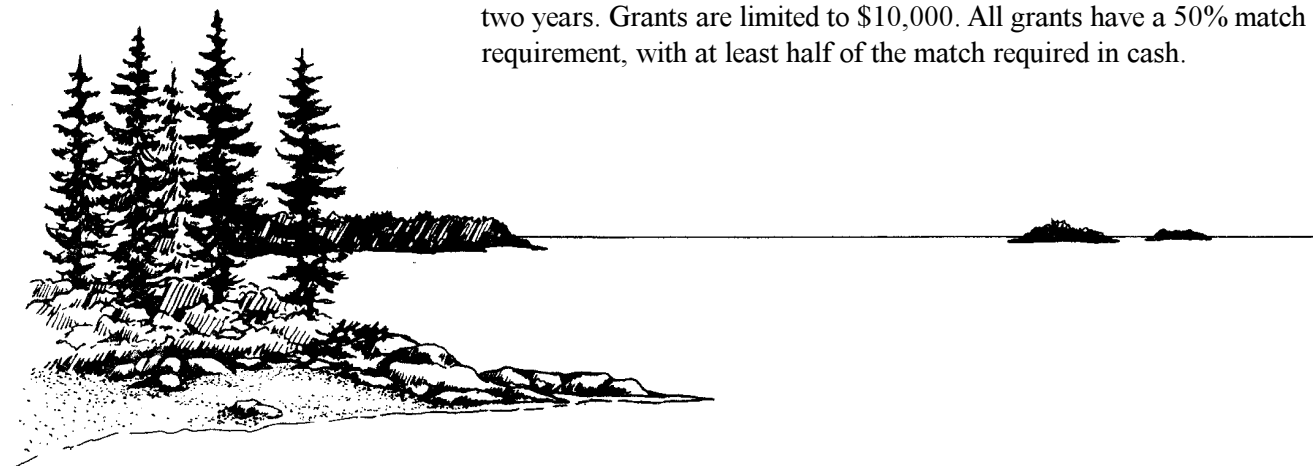
This program allows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide matching funds to support restoration projects. Priority funding is directed to national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries, but restoration projects on private lands are also eligible. In 1996, The Nature Conservancy (Maine Chapter) received a Challenge Grant to restore a degraded section of one of its preserves and Rachel Carson and Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge received Challenge Grants for coastal marsh restoration projects. Challenge Grants are typically limited to \$15,000 or less.

## Land and Water Conservation Fund

Federal land management agencies can request money from this fund to acquire lands for federal protection. State agencies can also request money from this fund to acquire land and expand outdoor recreation opportunities. Revenues from surplus property sales, motorboat fuel taxes, offshore oil and gas extraction, and user fees collected at National Parks and other federal fee collection areas raise about \$900 million annually for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. However, funds actually appropriated by Congress are much less. In 1995, ten nesting islands in coastal Maine were acquired and protected by Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge with \$800,000 from this fund. Additional land acquisition is pending for Petit Manan and Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuges.

## Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment Mini-Grants

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment is supported in part by a federal grant. Local organizations can apply for matching funds from the Council to complete projects in their community that benefit the marine and coastal environment. Nearly 30 educational, research, marine debris and pollution reduction, and habitat restoration and protection projects were funded in the last two years. Grants are limited to \$10,000. All grants have a 50% match requirement, with at least half of the match required in cash.



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## Partnerships for Wildlife

This matching grant program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides grants for state fish and wildlife agencies focusing on species which are NOT hunted or fished, or NOT protected under the Endangered Species Act or the Marine Mammals Protection Act. Priority is given to projects involving species at risk of becoming threatened or endangered. Grants can be used for resource management and research, land acquisition, restoration or enhancement, education and/or promoting non-consumptive forms of wildlife recreation (i.e. photography, viewing). States must provide 1/3 of the cost, private groups can contribute 1/3 of the cost, and the Partnerships Program provides the final third. Each state is limited to \$250,000 annually from this program.

## Other federal habitat protection opportunities

Other federal agencies provide a variety of grants for conservation initiatives. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency provides NonPoint Source Pollution 319 Grants to local or state government and private nonprofit conservation and planning organizations. The U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program provides up to 75% federal cost-sharing to acquire (fee or easement) forest lands threatened by development. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides funding through the Wetlands Reserve Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, the Forestry Incentives Program, and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Federal funds from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act may be available through the state Dept. of Transportation for specific kinds of conservation work, linked to alternative transportation.

## Other state habitat protection opportunities

Other habitat protection opportunities may be available in your state or province. For example, in Maine, land protection funds are available through a statewide lottery, a new statewide credit card, the "loon license plate," and occasionally through bond issues. Contact state officials for additional information.

## Environmental Grantmaking Foundations

Private foundations support environmental initiatives, and there are comprehensive reference books, updated annually, that list and describe the kinds of programs each foundation is likely to support. Reference books are frequently available at major libraries. Gulf of Maine Coastal Ecosystems Program has a 1996 edition of Environmental Grantmaking Foundations, and partners are welcome to review the book in our office library.



For additional information on grants for habitat protection that involve federal funding, please contact:  
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